

# THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 80/NO. 2 JANUARY 18, 2016

## Cuban workers and farmers mark 57 years of revolution

BY SETH GALINSKY

On Jan. 1, 1959, U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista fled Cuba as the Rebel Army of workers and peasants, led by Fidel Castro, was advancing across the island. Seven days later the victorious revolutionaries entered Havana to the cheers of hundreds of thousands who filled the streets.

On Dec. 17, 2014, in another victory, the last of the Cuban Five revolutionaries imprisoned in the U.S. since 1998 — framed up by the FBI for

**DEFEND, EMULATE THE CUBAN REVOLUTION!**  
 — Editorial, page 9

working to prevent violent attacks by paramilitary groups based in Florida — returned home, a precondition for an agreement with Washington to re-establish diplomatic relations. Since their return the Five have traveled around the island — and the world — sharing their experiences on the front lines of the U.S. class struggle as part of the sizable section of U.S. workers who are in prison.

“Even in the worst of times [in

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## Chicago actions continue against killings by cops

‘Arrest cops who shot down student, neighbor!’



Above, Militant/Dan Fein; inset, Reuters/Frank Polich  
 “You call the police, you try to get help, you lose a loved one,” said Janet Cooksey, Quintonio LeGrier’s mother. Above, Dec. 27 vigil in Chicago for LeGrier and Bettie Jones, shot and killed by cops the day before. Inset, Cooksey, left, at Dec. 29 action.

BY ALYSON KENNEDY  
 AND JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO — More than 100 people turned out for a vigil here Dec. 27, the day after Quintonio LeGrier and Bettie Jones were shot dead in their homes by Chicago police. The shootings come amidst an escalating political crisis for Mayor Rahm Emanuel and other city officials. Protests have

continued for over a month since the release of a video showing the 2014 killing of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald by Chicago cop Jason Van Dyke. Van Dyke has been indicted for murder.

“You call the police, you try to get help and you lose a loved one,” Janet Cooksey, LeGrier’s mother, told a news conference before the vigil. “What are they trained for? Just to kill? I thought that we were supposed to get service and protection. I mean,

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## Washington war plans unravel as conflicts surge in Middle East

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The Barack Obama administration has suffered a series of setbacks in its plans to forge a strategic bloc with Moscow and Tehran to bring about a cease-fire in Syria, increase coordination of military moves against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and bring stability to U.S. interests in the region. Competing national interests have fueled growing conflicts between Iran and Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Russia, and stepped-up war moves by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan against Kurds in the southeastern part of the country.

Plans are increasingly uncertain for a U.N.-sponsored Jan. 25 international conference to discuss steps toward forming a coalition government in Syria.

At the same time, Washington continues to step up bombing and other military moves in both Syria and Iraq.

Moscow and Tehran want to keep long-time ally Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad in power. Washington has no viable replacement it trusts among opponents of Assad claiming to lead Syria’s Sunni majority. Zahran Al-loush, one of the most prominent Sunni militia leaders who has fought both Assad’s regime and Islamic State and was expected to be one of the opposition’s delegates to the U.N. conference

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## Obama administration launches raids to deport Central Americans



CASA de Maryland

Dec. 30 demonstration at White House protests move to deport Central American immigrants.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Barack Obama administration is conducting highly publicized immigration raids to rapidly deport adults and children who have come to the U.S. from Central America over the past couple of years. The opera-

tion began in Georgia, North Carolina and Texas with immigration cops taking 121 people into custody over the Jan. 2-3 weekend.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents are targeting thousands

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## UK gov’t moves to arm more cops, let them ‘shoot to kill’

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

LONDON — Prime Minister David Cameron has announced plans to give greater leeway for police to shoot to kill. Using the recent terrorist attacks in Paris as a pretext, the extension will cover all cases, not just those defined as “counterterrorism.” This takes place amid protests against the police shooting of 28-year-old Jermaine Baker here in December.

Senior police officers, including London Metropolitan Police Commissioner Bernard Hogan-Howe, have been pressing for the changes, claiming that current regulations make it hard to carry through government plans to recruit significantly more armed cops after the attacks in Paris. Of 130,000 officers in England and Wales, 6,000 are trained to use guns.

The Home Office announced Dec. 17 an extra \$50 million for firearms officers, and a police taskforce is examining how to increase the number of armed response vehicles and spe-

cialist counterterrorism teams, and whether to equip riot police with firearms. Authorities are also planning to increase the number of cops armed with Tasers.

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Australian dockworkers push back attacks on union

Kohler workers end strike, make gains but still face 2-tier



# NJ: ‘The autopsy showed my son’s death was homicide’

BY DEAN HAZLEWOOD

BRIDGETON, N.J. — “The autopsy showed my son’s death was homicide, the cops must be jailed for this,” Sheila Reid, mother of Jerame Reid, who was killed by cops here a year ago, told some 60 people at a march and rally Dec. 28.

On Dec. 30, 2014, Reid was the passenger in a car stopped by Bridgeton cops Braheme Days and Roger Worley, allegedly for not making a complete stop at a stop sign. What happened next was captured on the cops’ car videocam, which was released after public pressure and news media demands.

Days says he sees a gun in the glove compartment and reaches in and takes it. Reid says he is going to get out and lay on the ground. The cops tell him to stay in the car. Reid gets out with his hands in the air and the cops shoot him over and over. A Cumberland County grand jury declined to file criminal charges against the two officers in August.

Two months earlier county officials paid Reid’s family \$340,000 to settle a

lawsuit he filed after he was beaten in the county jail in 2009. The family is suing the city of Bridgeton for his killing.

Protesters held a rally at the residential intersection where Reid was killed, marked by a small roadside memorial. Then participants marched to the Cumberland County Jail. A busload from Newark organized by the Reid family and the People’s Organization for Progress joined the family, neighbors and members of the National Awareness Alliance in Salem County.

Reid’s wife, Lawanda Reid, and her mother Hazel Hartsfield, joined the protest. He had visited Hartsfield an hour before being shot down. “Never did I think I wouldn’t see him again when he walked out the door that night,” she told fellow protesters.

“The system is crooked,” said Cecile Hepburn, grandmother of Kashad Ashford, who was shot by Rutherford cops in September 2014. “We can get no justice in our children’s deaths.” Ashford’s mother, Regina Ashford, also marched.

A few hours before the rally a grand jury in Cleveland announced that no charges would be filed against the cops who fatally shot 12-year-old Tamir Rice there in November 2014. Marchers chanted his name and the names of others killed by police, including Eric Garner, Laquan McDonald and Michael Brown, along with those of Ashford and Reid.

“I will continue to protest to keep Jerame’s spirit alive,” Sheila Reid told the crowd, and will keep on marching “until justice is achieved — by any means necessary.”

## Protests demand charges against Paradise cop



Militant/Betsey Stone

PARADISE, Calif. — Carrying signs demanding “Jail Feaster” and “Let a jury decide, not DA Ramsey,” protesters rallied here Dec. 26 demanding Paradise cop Patrick Feaster be charged for killing 26-year-old Andrew Thomas Nov. 25. Many local residents honked their horns in support as they drove by.

Feaster had tailed Thomas and his wife, Darien Ehorn, after they left a town bar. Their car hit a street divider and flipped over. Ehorn was thrown from the SUV and died at the scene. Feaster shot Thomas as he tried to climb out of the window of the wrecked car. He died in a hospital three weeks later.

A police video shows Feaster shoot Thomas, who was unarmed, and then, ignoring him and Ehorn, pull out his flashlight and look for the bullet casing.

Members of the Ridge Coalition for Peace and Justice and friends of Thomas met Jan. 3 to map plans to continue protests in the face of District Attorney Mike Ramsey’s refusal to charge Feaster.

“This is an injustice against our friend,” Ashley Seawright, who knew Thomas since she was 10, told the meeting. “We want Feaster fired and charged.”

Protests are set at the corner of Pearson Road and Black Olive Drive in Paradise for noon the next two Saturdays, Jan. 9 and 16.

— BETSEY STONE AND JEFF POWERS

## Workers donate ‘blood money’ to build SWP

“Enclosed is \$30,” wrote Charles Godine, a factory worker in Miami, donating to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund. “This company pays most of its production workers minimum wage and takes a ‘vacation’ in December, amounting to a three-week layoff for a lot of us. This \$30 gift card is their way of saying ‘happy holidays.’”

One-off payments from employers like safety and production bonuses, contract-signing incentives and holiday gift cards — blood money — are bribes to convince us to be grateful to the boss instead of standing up and fighting for our interests.

More than a dozen Walmart workers recently contributed profit-sharing “MyShare” bonuses. “These paltry sums don’t make up for low wages and a lack of decent benefits,” three of them from Seattle wrote in a note along with checks totaling \$349. “We are glad to contribute them to the revolutionary party as part of the blood money the capitalists meagerly dole out to try to have us identify with ‘our company.’”

Blood money is the political cornerstone of the Capital Fund, which finances long-range work of the Socialist Workers Party. To make a donation, contact the SWP in your area listed on page 8.

— EMMA JOHNSON

# THE MILITANT

## Construction workers fight for job safety

Deaths and injuries have spiked in the construction industry over the past two years. Bosses’ disregard for safety primarily hits non-union, immigrant workers. The ‘Militant’ supports the fight for unionization and for workers control of safety on the job.

Laborers Local 79  
Thousands of union construction workers in New York march for safety Dec. 10.

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# The Militant

Vol. 80/No. 2

Closing news date: January 6, 2016

Editor: John Studer

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Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, one week in August and one week in September.

Business manager: Lea Sherman  
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899  
Fax: (212) 244-4947  
E-mail: themilitant@mac.com  
Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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# Alameda, Calif., meeting protests attack on mosque

BY BETSEY STONE

ALAMEDA, Calif. — Over 150 people turned out for a “Standing Against Hate Crime” meeting here Dec. 27 to protest a Dec. 11 attack and threats against the Islamic Center of Alameda. Held at the Elks Lodge, the gathering was sponsored by the center and chaired by Imam Musa Baldé.

Baldé welcomed everyone, explaining that a large plate glass window at the center’s building where Muslim women pray, across the street from the main mosque, was broken after the center received threatening phone calls. “Go back home,” callers said. “You’re not welcome here.”

“This *is* our home,” Baldé said, referring to the establishment nearly 20 years ago of the Islamic center and mosque in Alameda, an island city in the bay next to Oakland.

“We are here in peace and love,” Baldé said, “and against terrorism by anyone, whether they be Muslim, Christian, Jewish or atheists.

“We are also concerned because our sisters wearing the hijab have found some people are not as congenial as before on buses or other public places,” he said.

Many of those attending were from churches, synagogues and community organizations in Alameda. People in the community around the center have brought flowers and volunteered to help repair the damage.

The program was kicked off by three speakers, followed by an open forum, where many expressed their readiness to defend the center if any more attacks are threatened.

“We have to learn from history,” said

Michael Yoshii, pastor of the United Methodist Church in Alameda. “During World War II, many in our congregation were immigrants from Japan, taken away to concentration camps under the Roosevelt administration.” Yoshii cited war hysteria, racism and lack of leadership as being the reason why the mass incarceration of Japanese took place.

“That is why Japanese-Americans are coming out in support of Muslims today,” he said.

“In the workers’ movement we say an injury to one is any injury to all,” Joel Britton said, speaking for the Socialist Workers Party.

“Attacks like the assault on the center not only harm Muslims, they are an attack on the rights and political space of all working people to organize and fight for our interests.

“The attacks on Muslims go hand in hand with the war drive, military interventions in the Middle East and elsewhere,” Britton said. “So we say: End U.S. bombings and other attacks in the



Militant photos by Betsey Stone

Above, Imam Musa Baldé chairs Dec. 27 meeting of over 150 people protesting recent threats and attacks against Islamic Center and Muslims in Alameda, California. Inset, Joel Britton, speaking for the Socialist Workers Party, said attacks on mosque were challenge to rights of all workers.



Middle East now. And stop the attacks on Muslims and refugees from the Middle East and elsewhere.”

Rabbi Allen Bennett, who came with over a dozen members of the nearby Temple Israel Synagogue, also spoke.

During the open forum, Dina Ezzed-

dine, a young woman from Oakland, took the floor and pointed to the history of aggression by the U.S. and other imperialist powers against peoples in the Middle East, from Iraq to Libya.

“You can’t understand anything that’s going on if you don’t understand this,” she said.

## SWP campaigns against Washington’s war drive

BY NAOMI CRAINE

From joining protests against attacks on Muslims and mosques to discussions on workers’ doorsteps, the Socialist Workers Party is campaigning against Washington’s war drive in the Middle East and the attacks on the working class at home that go along with it. As they do so, SWP members are using the party’s paper, the *Militant*, and books on revolutionary politics published by Pathfinder Press to

put forward an independent working-class political course. They explain why working people need to break from the Democrats, Republicans and other capitalist parties, and build our own party, based on the unions, that can help mobilize to fight in our class interests.

“We participated in a forum against anti-Muslim attacks in Alameda Dec. 27,” wrote Eric Simpson from Oakland, California (see article above). “We learned about the event a couple days earlier when we visited the mosque to express solidarity after it had been vandalized.

“We got a warm response to a small table at the door of the speakout featuring Pathfinder books in English and Arabic and the *Militant*,” Simpson said. “More than two dozen participants purchased copies of the paper, and several bought books in Arabic including *Is Biology Woman’s Destiny?* *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and the *Road to Workers Power*, *The First and Second Declarations of Havana* and *Voices From Prison*.

“One high school student was seriously interested in the literature. ‘What is the difference between communism and socialism?’ he asked. He got a copy of the paper, learned how to read it on the web, and made sure to leave his contact information. Another participant picked up a subscription,” said Simpson.

Party members from Oakland also took part in a Dec. 18 rally of 200 people outside San Francisco City Hall to speak out against attacks on Arabs and Muslims. One of the speakers was Rashed Albeshari, who was physically attacked by California Department of Corrections employee Denise Slader Dec. 6. Slader shouted abuse at him and others, disrupting a Muslim prayer service at a park in Castro Valley. Albeshari began recording her rant, at which point Slader slapped him and threw coffee on him.

“Sixteen people at the protest bought copies of the *Militant*, and we sold several pamphlets,” wrote Carole Lesnick.

SWP members and supporters from Oakland and Colorado are organizing a second team to Fort Morgan, Colorado, where nearly 200 Muslim packing-house workers were fired in a dispute over the right to prayer breaks. They will talk with workers at the plant and in the surrounding area.

Deborah Liatos from Los Angeles sent a note about discussions going door to door Jan. 3 in San Bernardino, where supporters of Islamic State had killed 14 people a month earlier.

Natisha Robinson, a 19-year-old worker at an Amazon distribution center, told Liatos she disagreed with anti-Muslim statements made by Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump. How can you blame all people who come from Pakistan because that’s where the attackers in San Bernardino originally came from, she said. “Trump said Mexican immigrants are rapists. How can you run for President and be down on people like that?”

“The Obama government and all the candidates — Democrats and Republicans alike — are using the attacks in France and San Bernardino to scapegoat Muslims and Arabs,” Liatos said, “and this is used against the working class as a whole.

“Natisha agreed when we explained the importance of workers fighting back, like the movements to fight for \$15 and a union and against police brutality,” she said. “We discussed why the working class needs to take power in the U.S. and around the world, and pointed to the example of the Cuban Revolution — what is possible when workers make a revolution.

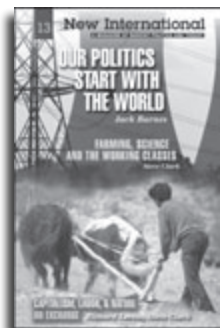
“A young auto body mechanic got a subscription to the *Militant*. He said since the attack in San Bernardino he is more hesitant to go out into crowds. He also said the police are scrutinizing people more, mostly if they are young and a lot of people in a car or together,” Liatos said. A restaurant worker also signed up.

To join in this campaign, contact the Socialist Workers Party in your area, listed on page 8.

## Special book offers for *Militant* subscribers



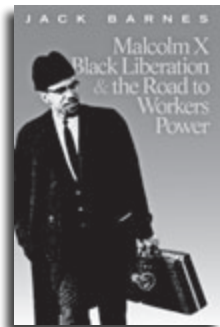
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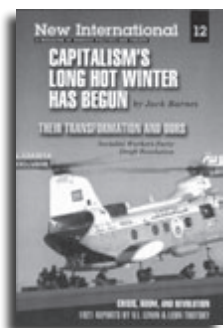
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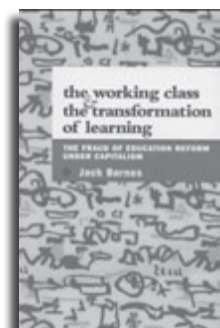
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# Washington's war plans

**Continued from front page**  
ence, was killed in airstrikes Dec. 25 by either Damascus or Moscow.

The Al Saud monarchy in Riyadh executed 47 prisoners Jan. 2, many by beheadings. Included among them was Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, an imam who has spoken out against the regime's attacks on Shiites. The gruesome images looked much like the brutal murders carried out by the reactionary Islamic State in Syria.

The moves come as the regime has embarked on a radical austerity plan as oil prices have plunged, wreaking havoc on the monarchy's balance sheet.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khomeini called for "divine revenge" against Riyadh. Demonstrators in Tehran sacked and set fire to the Saudi Embassy. In response, Riyadh broke diplomatic relations with the Iranian government. Bahrain, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates also cut back diplomatic ties.

The Saudi regime is locked in a prolonged proxy war against pro-Iranian forces in Yemen.

Since Turkish fighter jets shot down a Russian warplane at Turkey's border with Syria Nov. 24, relations between the countries' rulers continue to deteriorate. Russian President Vladimir Putin called the attack a "stab in the back" committed by "accomplices of terrorists." Moscow imposed a series of economic sanctions against Turkey.

## Turkish assault on Kurds

Erdogan vowed Dec. 31 to continue the Turkish regime's bloody assault on the country's oppressed Kurdish population in the southeast region and bragged that Turkish forces killed 3,100 fighters of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in 2015. Ankara launched a "synchronized war on terror" in July, ostensibly aimed at both Islamic State and the PKK, but in fact overwhelmingly targeting the Kurds.

Erdogan has sent bombers and thousands of Turkish troops with tanks to put many Kurdish towns under siege, displacing hundreds of thousands of

civilians.

"People are dying in their own homes," Nurettin Kurtay, a teacher in the region's Silopi district, told the *New York Times*. "Our schools and our infrastructure has been destroyed. There is no difference between what is going on here and next door in Iraq and Syria."

Following World War I, the victorious imperialist rulers of France and Britain, determined to prevent the establishment of an independent Kurdistan as they dismantled the defeated Ottoman Empire, divided the Kurds between Iran and the newly created countries of Turkey, Syria and Iraq. Roughly half of the region's 30 million Kurds live in Turkey today.

"There will be a Kurdistan reality in the next century," Selahattin Demirtas, leader of the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) in Turkey, said Dec. 27. Erdogan branded the statement "treason" and called for charges to be brought against him. The HDP is a threat to Erdogan and his ruling Justice and Development Party because it has gained support beyond the Kurdish population and surpassed the 10 percent threshold to gain seats in the Turkish parliament in the last two elections.

Kurdish fighters in Iraq and Syria are the only consistently effective fighters against Islamic State, driving their forces out of sections of the two countries.

Washington-backed Iraqi government forces, rebuilt after they crumbled in the face of Islamic State assaults early last year, retook from IS the city of Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province, Dec. 28. Their next target is the key city of Mosul.

To accomplish this goal, however, is impossible without the aid of Peshmerga forces from the semi-autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq. "You cannot do Mosul without Peshmerga," Iraqi Finance Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, a Kurd, told Reuters Dec. 29.

## Attacks on Muslims, mosques

As they step up war moves, Washington and other imperialist powers sought to use the specter of Islamic State terror attacks during the holiday season to justify increased military and police presence on city streets and new restrictions on political rights.



Police in Diyarbakir, Turkey, attack Dec. 31 protest of thousands against Turkish government's brutal assault on Kurdish population. Several hundred thousand people have been displaced.

Amidst government scapegoating and cries to limit immigration and rights of Muslims, attacks on mosques increased across the country.

New York Police Commissioner William Bratton fielded 6,000 heavily armed police officers around Times Square during the annual New Year's Eve celebration. Belgian authorities cancelled the annual holiday gathering in Brussels entirely.

Cops in Pasadena, California, stationed armed cops and surveillance cameras along the annual Rose Bowl football game parade route.

Officials in Munich, warning of terrorist threats Dec. 31, shut down rail stations and deployed heavily armed cops throughout the city.

While liberal media have focused attention on calls by Republican presidential candidates like Donald Trump and Ted Cruz to stop refugees from Syria from coming to the U.S., the Obama administration has stepped up attacks on travel by Muslims.

U.S. officials barred Pakistani-born British gym owner Mohammad Tariq Mahmood and his family from boarding a flight from London to Los Angeles Dec. 15 for a vacation at Disneyland. "They think every Muslim poses a threat," Mahmood told the press.

Two days later Ajmal Masroor, a British imam outspoken against Islamic State terrorism, was prevented from boarding a flight at London's Heathrow Airport by a U.S. diplomatic official who refused to give any explanation.

The Council on American-Islamic

Relations reports a continued increase in threats and assaults against Muslims and mosques across the country. In Alameda, California, and elsewhere, a number of these attacks have been met with broad solidarity and public protest (see article on page 3).

These attacks open the door to broader restrictions on political rights.

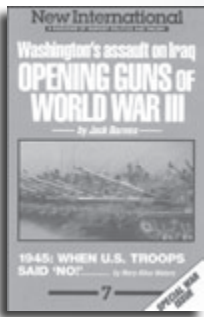
Department of Homeland Security officials say that beginning in 2016 they intend to deny U.S. citizens the ability to use state driver's licenses as proof of identity for air travel unless they are "enhanced" with a Radio Frequency Identity chip in compliance with the 2005 Real ID Act. The chip "will signal a secure system to pull up your biographic and biometric data for the CBP [Customs and Border Protection] officer as you approach the border inspection booth," according to the Homeland Security website.

People whose state governments do not issue such licenses will have to produce a passport or other proof of identity or be turned away.

## Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq

by Jack Barnes

In *New International* no. 7



"The Kurdish people have come to the center stage in world politics as never before, not primarily as victims, but as courageous and determined fighters for national rights."  
—Jack Barnes

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## 50 Years of Covert Operations in the U.S.

Washington's Political Police and the American Working Class

by Larry Seigle, Steve Clark, Farrell Dobbs

The 15-year political campaign of the Socialist Workers Party to expose decades of spying and disruption by the FBI and other opponents of government policies.  
\$12. Also in Spanish, Farsi



PATHFINDERPRESS.COM



Thousands of pairs of shoes stand for those denied right to march in Nov. 29 Partis Climate protest after government cancelled action under far-reaching state of emergency restrictions.

## Fight for \$15 an hour Statewide rally

Empire State Plaza Concourse  
Albany, N.Y.

Wed., Jan. 13, 10:30 a.m.

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## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA

#### Oakland

Deaths of Mario Martinez and Michael Tyree Prompt Protests and Arrests. Speaker: Eric Simpson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 15, 7:30 p.m. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

### CANADA

#### Montreal

'The Secret Trial 5,' Documentary Film by Five Muslim Men Against Ottawa's National Security Certificate Law. Fri., Jan. 15, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St. Denis, Suite 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.



# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

## Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles across the country!

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including workers fighting for \$15 and a union; locked-out ATI Steelworkers; Verizon workers opposing concessions; construction workers demanding safe conditions. I invite those involved in workers' battles to contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

—Maggie Trowe

### Australian dockworkers push back attacks on union

SYDNEY — Dockworkers in Brisbane and Sydney voted Nov. 16 to approve an agreement between the Maritime Union of Australia and Hutchinson Ports Australia ending a 103-day dispute over layoffs targeting union members.

Unionists carried out a weeklong strike after Hutchinson sacked 97 of its 224 workers by midnight text messages and emails Aug. 6. "They want to get rid of anyone outspoken" and violate seniority, striker Ray Byrne told the *Militant* during the stoppage. The strike ended Aug. 13 when an industrial court ordered temporary reinstatement of the sacked workers while negotiations between the union and company took place. The sacked workers were reinstated on the payroll but did not get called to work during the protracted dispute.

Wharfies pitched a protest camp outside Hutchinson's gates, which won support from many unionists and stayed up until the settlement was reached.

In a victory for the union, Hutchinson agreed to reinstate all workers and to use only voluntary layoffs to reduce the workforce. The 60 workers who have signed up for this package will receive double the payout the company originally offered. The union also won the right of return for those workers who take the layoff. They will be given first preference to be rehired if the port expands.

To the company's advantage, some full-time workers will convert to casual status without guaranteed hours, and the standard workweek will increase from 30 to 32 hours.

As of Dec. 15 all workers who did not take the layoff had returned to work.

—Joanne Kuniarsky

### Fight for \$15 fast-food workers support Calif. farmworkers

FRESNO, Calif. — A United Farm Workers Christmas party here celebrated gains scored over the recent period. After union protests and testimony by farmworkers, the state Agricultural Labor Relations Board in a September ruling rejected a union decertification election organized and financed by Gerawan Farming, one of the largest growers in the U.S. and a leader of the anti-union campaign.

The UFW has also registered victories for tomato pickers, including contracts covering some 1,500 workers in the San Joaquin Valley and an improved contract at Pacific Triple E.

More than 200 farmworkers, their families and supporters, including a contingent of unionists from the San Francisco Bay Area, attended the festive event. It included traditional dancers from Oaxaca, a state in southern Mexico that many farmworkers here hail from.

Responding to a UFW appeal, Bay Area fast-food and Walmart workers fighting for \$15 an hour and a union and other unionists rented a van and drove three hours to participate, bringing toys

and financial donations.

"Whenever you need the Fight for \$15, just call on us," said Shonda Roberts, a leader of the fight who recently won her job back at Kentucky Fried Chicken after being fired for pro-union activities. "We got your back!"

Petra Riynaga, another leader of the Fight for \$15, said farmworkers "are an example that we can learn from in fighting for our rights. Their integrity, culture and traditions made them stronger and made us stronger also."

## Kohler workers end strike, make gains but still face 2-tier

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

KOHLER, Wis. — After a monthlong strike, members of United Auto Workers Local 833 voted 91 percent to ratify a four-year contract with Kohler Inc. Dec. 16. More than 1,800 of the 2,100 local members voted. The pact narrowed, but did not eliminate, the gap between two pay tiers implemented in 2010.

"The tiers are still there but we got our wages a little higher," Nathan Brion, 23, a Tier B forklift driver who worked at Kohler for two months and then went on strike, told the *Militant*. "The Tier A workers didn't have to do this, but they went out for us. I was surprised by support we got from people who didn't even work for Kohler. This was a popular strike that showed that labor isn't cheap."

"The company was not expecting what we did," UAW Local 833 Vice President Jim Brock told the *Militant* in a phone interview Dec. 22. "They thought it was going to be another roll-over, which we had been doing the last five years."

The 2010 contract, approved when there were layoffs at Kohler and factory closings in the area, included instituting



Militant/Eric Simpson

At Dec. 17 holiday party in Fresno, California, United Farm Workers celebrated union gains, joined by Bay Area workers fighting for \$15 an hour and oil and transit unionists.

Shirley Peña, a member of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1555 at the Bay Area Rapid Transit, and Ben Fields, a Tesoro oil refinery worker and member

of United Steelworkers Local 5, brought contributions from their locals.

—Ellen Haywood and Gerardo Sánchez

a second tier paying new hires substantially less, a five-year wage freeze and higher health insurance costs.

The strike began Nov. 15 when the local voted overwhelmingly against a "last, best and final" three-year contract proposal in which Kohler, an international manufacturer of plumbing and bath fixtures, refused the union's demand for a contract that would end the two-tier wage system.

The new four-year contract makes small improvements in the wage offer. Tier B workers will receive an average \$3.20 an hour increase in 2016, similar to the rejected contract offer, and 50 cents an hour, 10 cents more than previously offered, for each of the next three years, bringing their average pay to \$19.39 by 2019. Tier A workers' average pay will increase from the current \$22.78 to \$24.78 in 2019.

The strikers received widespread solidarity from the community and the labor movement. Thousands turned out for two union rallies. The local stocked a food pantry with contributions from workers and local businesses. The Carpenters union sent a \$42,000 contribution.

"It was awesome that other unions were standing up for us, but we were also getting a lot of nonunion people bringing us food, honking their horns in support," said David Ottensmann, a Tier A worker. "We settled on a contract, but we were fighting for our Tier B brothers and sisters and our children. We showed that the unions have their place."

"I was ready to retire at the end of January. Standing up for the Tier B was the reason for the strike. They are the future," said Michael Volk, who has worked at Kohler for 39 years.

"I'm content, but not happy," Kurt Martinek, a Tier B ceramic sink-maker, told the *Militant*. "We are getting better compensation. It is a step in the right direction. We put up a good fight."

Martinek is from a nonunion family. "I saw how a union can stick together," he said. "The outpouring from the community was fantastic. It would have been nice to get rid of the two-tier over the course of the contract. As workers retire, Tier B will become Tier A. But the company will try to get another Tier B. That is what I think is coming and then it is time for the union to step up and do what we saw here."

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 18, 1991

Hundreds of thousands of Haitians mobilized in the streets of Haiti's capital, Port-Au-Prince, and other cities January 7 to prevent consolidation of a coup aimed at stopping President-elect Jean Bertrand Aristide from assuming office.

Protestors made barricades of burning tires and blocked access to the airport. Thousands chanted slogans.

Twenty-six demonstrators were killed outside the offices of Roger Lafontant, the leader of the coup attempt, when gunmen inside opened fire and tossed hand grenades.

Lafontant was interior and defense minister under deposed dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier and head of the Ton-tons Macoutes, a paramilitary group responsible for killing, torturing and abusing thousands of people.



January 17, 1966

*Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee statement [excerpt] presented by SNCC chairman John Lewis.*

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee assumes its right to dissent with United States foreign policy on any issue, and states its opposition to United States involvement in the war in Vietnam on these grounds:

We believe the United States government has been deceptive in claims of concern for the freedom of the Vietnamese people, just as the government has been deceptive in claiming concern for the freedom of the colored people in such other countries as the Dominican Republic, the Congo, South Africa, Rhodesia and in the U.S. itself.

We ourselves have often been victims of violence and confinement executed by U.S. government officials.



January 18, 1941

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Backed by high-ranking officers of the United States Navy, Representative Everett M. Dirksen introduced a bill in Congress this week to "make all crews on American merchant ships members of the active Naval Reserve." He said the intention of the bill is to "militarize commercial shipping in event of a national emergency" and "to break the Communist grip on the American merchant marine."

One of the real reasons behind the move is revealed in figures released by the Navy Department, simultaneously with the announcement of the Dirksen Bill. The Navy had set itself a goal of enrolling 30,000 merchant seamen in the Naval Reserve during the past four years, but only 339 such volunteers have actually been enrolled in this period.



# Hawa Bah: ‘Join fight against NY police killing of my son’

BY MAGGIE TROWE

NEW YORK — “Tell people this isn’t only about justice for my son, it’s about future generations of young people,” said Hawa Bah in a Jan. 5 interview at her home in Harlem. Her son Mohamed Bah, a 28-year-old student and taxi driver with no criminal record, was killed by New York City police. She is fighting to hold the cops and city responsible.

Hawa Bah, a businesswoman in Guinea, West Africa, visited her son in September 2012 and found him suffering from depression. She called 911 to ask for an ambulance to take him to the hospital, and went downstairs to wait. Instead, five cops in SWAT gear arrived.

“I told them, ‘My son didn’t do anything wrong. He’s sick and needs to go to the hospital,’” Bah said. The cops pushed past her, went up to Mohamed Bah’s apartment and fired 10 shots, striking him eight times, once in the head. He was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

The police claimed Mohamed Bah threatened them with a knife.

“They treated him that way because he was Black,” Hawa Bah said. She and her attorneys demanded the police test the knife they claimed Mohamed had for fingerprints. They never did. Today the cops say the knife and other potentially important items from the scene were “contaminated” when the evidence warehouse was flooded during Hurricane Sandy in October 2012.

In November 2013 Manhattan Dis-

trict Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. said a grand jury had ruled the cops’ “use of deadly physical force was not unlawful.”

Bah says the city covered up the real facts and demands the investigation be reopened. She filed a lawsuit demanding damages. During legal discovery the cover-up is unraveling. Randolph McLaughlin, an attorney with Newman Ferrara, the law firm representing the Bah family, told the *Militant*.

Some of the police changed their stories in sworn depositions, the attorney said. The cops said earlier that Mohamed Bah had slashed at them with his knife, even after they used stun guns. Then Detective Edwin Mateo yelled, “He’s stabbing me! Shoot him!” and the cops opened fire.

Now they say when they fired stun guns and a bean bag at Bah, the wire from a stun gun shocked Mateo, who cried out and fell to the floor. Then he and two other officers started shooting.



Hawa Bah, center, with photo of her son Mohamed at Oct. 6 rally in New York along with other mothers of those killed by police, including Iris Baez, left, and Gwen Carr, behind Baez.

“I asked Mateo whether at the time he yelled, ‘Shoot him!’ was Mohamed Bah stabbing him?” McLaughlin said. “He answered, ‘No.’ I asked if he was stabbing anybody, and he said, ‘No.’”

“Forensic evidence in the coroner’s report shows that all bullets entered in a slightly downward direction, indicating the shooters had to be standing above Mr. Bah,” the attorney added. “And

the bullet to his head was shot at close range, from 12 to 18 inches away.”

Hawa Bah has become a stalwart of the fight against police brutality and killings here. Along with Iris Baez, Gwen Carr, Katiadou Diallo, Constance Malcolm and Juanita Young — all of whom had sons killed by the New York police — she can be found in the front line of area rallies and marches.

## Obama administration launches deportation raids

Continued from front page

of people whose requests for asylum have been denied. Many missed court dates to fight their deportation because they lacked an attorney or knowledge about complicated court procedures. The vast majority will be sent back to El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala with no right to further court hearings or judicial review.

“We had a mother and her three children taken by ICE, pretending to be looking for a ‘criminal’ and asked to enter the house to check whether he was there,” Charles Kuck, an immigration attorney in Atlanta told the *Wall Street Journal* Jan. 3.

Some 100 people, including mothers of children threatened with deportation, rallied against the roundup in an action organized by CASA de Maryland outside the White House Dec. 30.

Rev. Alison Harrington, pastor of Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson, Arizona, is offering sanctuary to

those facing deportation and encouraging other churches to do the same.

More than 100,000 families have entered the U.S. through its southwest border seeking asylum since 2014, as well as tens of thousands of unaccompanied children.

The plan to begin the raids was announced on the front page of the *Washington Post* Dec. 24. They are the first nationwide operations directed specifically against Central Americans.

The raids could be the largest since April 2012 when immigration agents swept up more than 3,100 people who ICE claimed were “criminal aliens.”

While the overall number of deportations has been declining since 2004, the number of immigrants deported under judicial orders and who therefore face felony charges if they try to re-enter the United States increased fourfold from 1997 to 2013, but have since declined substantially.

The number of cops patrolling the

U.S. border has doubled over the past decade to more than 18,000 today, ramped up under both the George W. Bush and Obama administrations, making it much more difficult to enter without papers.

The initiation of these raids comes amid a lot of media attention to Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump’s call for the mass deportation of undocumented immigrants and for extending the wall on Mexico’s border.

“The President’s actions are far more harmful than Trump’s demagoguery,” said Pablo Alvarado, executive director of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, in a Jan. 3 statement. “While Trump’s dangerous rhetoric stigmatizes our loved ones, President Obama actually deports them.”

An average of 34,000 people are held in detention at any one time in the U.S. on immigration charges. With the recent surge of Central Americans crossing the border the Department of Homeland Security opened family detention centers, two in Texas and one in Pennsylvania, that now hold more than 1,700 people.

Many women and their children have been held for months. In August a federal judge in California ordered the Obama administration to begin releasing them from these centers starting in October. The administration said it’s complying, but also appealing.

From California to Colorado and Alabama to Texas, detained immigrants have held hunger strikes over the last three months to protest the abysmal conditions. Supporters of 10 men from Bangladesh who had been on a hunger strike for nearly a month rallied outside the Krome immigration prison near Miami Dec. 27 to protest a judge’s order to force-feed the men.

In recent months the flow of families crossing the border has shot up. More than 12,000 individuals were apprehended at the border in October and November, compared to 4,500 in the same months the previous year. The number of unaccompanied minors caught by border cops during those two months doubled to more than 10,000.

### New steps in fight to bring to trial cops who killed Mohamed Bah

**Hear:** Hawa Bah, Mohamed’s mother; Maggie Trowe, Socialist Workers Party

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## Colorado meatpackers fired in dispute over prayer breaks

BY KAREN RAY  
AND RICH STUART

FORT MORGAN, Colo. — “We say it is a constitutional right that we can pray,” Mohamed Ahmed told the *Militant*, describing how nearly 200 Muslim packinghouse workers have been fired by Cargill Meat Solutions here. For

years the company had allowed workers to take time during the workday to pray, but now the company says no, said Ahmed, who has worked at the plant for more than three years. The fired workers are mostly from Somalia, with some from Senegal, Mali and the Mideast.

On Dec. 21, these workers walked off

the job in protest after company officials told them to go home if they wanted to pray. The company then began firing them, claiming they had violated the company’s three-day “no call, no-show” policy.

“It used to be if there were four guys pulling on the line, then one guy takes prayer break and comes back and then the next guy goes and prays,” said Ahmed, at a Somali cafe near the plant where we joined him and a number of other fired workers. He added that they would be gone less than five minutes and the line didn’t stop.

“We don’t know why this is happening now, but there is new management” in the fabrication side of the plant, said Mohammed Farah.

“Maybe it is because of what happened in San Bernardino and Paris,” said Muse Shafi, referring to the anti-Muslim campaign whipped up in Washington and other imperialist capitals

Continued on page 9



Militant/Karen Ray

Meatpackers fired by Cargill after plant walkout Dec. 21 against company’s refusal to allow them to pray. From left, Mohamed Ahmed, Muse Shafi, Sharif Shafi, Ilow and Mohamud Hajir.



# Cuban Revolution's 57 years

**Continued from front page**

prison], we felt that freedom, that joy, that feeling of usefulness of being there denouncing every day the double standard of the empire's policy in its much vaunted fight against terrorism," Antonio Guerrero, one of the Five, recently told the Cuban paper *Granma*.

For the last 57 years the U.S. government has done everything within its power to overturn the revolution. It has armed counterrevolutionaries, organized assassination attempts against revolutionary leaders, launched the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, and imposed a draconian economic embargo that continues to cause severe hardships for the Cuban people.

But the Cuban Revolution and its leadership remains a bone in the throat of U.S. imperialism and a beacon for class-conscious workers across the globe, living proof that it is possible to stand up against seemingly impossible odds and win.

On the one-year anniversary of the announcement of the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the U.S., Cuban President Raúl Castro said, "Despite Cuba's repeated claim for the return of the territory illegally occupied by the Guantánamo Naval Base, the government of the United States has stated that it has no intention of changing the status of that enclave."

Washington continues to enforce its brutal embargo and finances the so-called dissidents and illegal radio and television broadcasts to Cuba in violation of Cuban sovereignty.

## U.S. capitalists fear example of Cuba

U.S. capitalists hated the revolution from the start, not just because they feared losing their superprofits — dominating everything from sugar and cattle lands to oil refineries, mineral rights and casinos — but because working people in Cuba were gain-

ing confidence in their ability to stand up to U.S. imperialism and to be the masters of their own destiny, setting an example for Latin America and the world.

To Washington and Batista, the revolution's advance was incomprehensible. On Jan. 1, 1959, the rebels had at the most 3,000 armed men and women, yet they defeated more than 80,000 of Batista's soldiers and cops.

Washington provided planes so Batista and his closest henchmen could flee the island, leaving power in the hands of a military junta. The Rebel Army called a general strike, which swept the island. The junta was swept aside and a revolutionary government put in place.

A survey before the revolution found some 60 percent of rural families lived in huts with dirt floors and no running water; 70 percent of them used kerosene lamps for lighting and the rest had no source of lighting at all. Hundreds of thousands were unemployed.

## Workers control

The revolutionary leadership organized working people in Cuba to take control of the factories, mines, mills and farms to improve their lives and reverse these miserable conditions.

In March 1959, the revolutionary government took over the Cuban Telephone Company and reduced the rates. It ordered the lowering of rents by 30 to 50 percent. In May it enacted an agrarian reform law that encouraged the formation of cooperatives, and distributed land to landless peasants. Popular militias were organized to defend and advance these gains arms in hands.

In late October 1959 President Dwight Eisenhower authorized the State Department and the CIA to create armed Cuban counterrevolutionary groups in preparation for moves to overthrow the revolution.

In June 1960, when U.S.-based Esso



Top/Granma; Right/Bohemia  
Top, Rebel Army combatants celebrate liberation of Santa Clara, Cuba, from Batista dictatorship, Jan. 1, 1959. Right, literacy volunteer works in rural area, 1961. Some 100,000 students, the majority women, joined Conrado Benítez youth brigade, named in honor of young literacy volunteer murdered by U.S.-backed counterrevolutionaries. They helped teach over 700,000 people to read and write in less than a year.

and Texaco and British-Dutch Shell refused to refine oil Cuba bought from the Soviet Union, the revolutionary government organized working people to take the refineries over. In August, Fidel Castro announced the expropriation of 26 U.S.-owned companies. In October, Eisenhower imposed a sweeping trade embargo prohibiting the vast majority of U.S. trade with Cuba.

## Stepped up U.S.-sponsored attacks

In late December bombs and arson attacks by counterrevolutionaries destroyed businesses in Havana. On Dec. 31 the revolutionary government warned that Washington was preparing to invade. Three days later Eisenhower broke all diplomatic relations.

Cuban working people organized a massive literacy campaign, mobilizing more than 100,000 student volunteers and over 150,000 others to go into the countryside, teaching 707,212 people to read and write in less than a year.

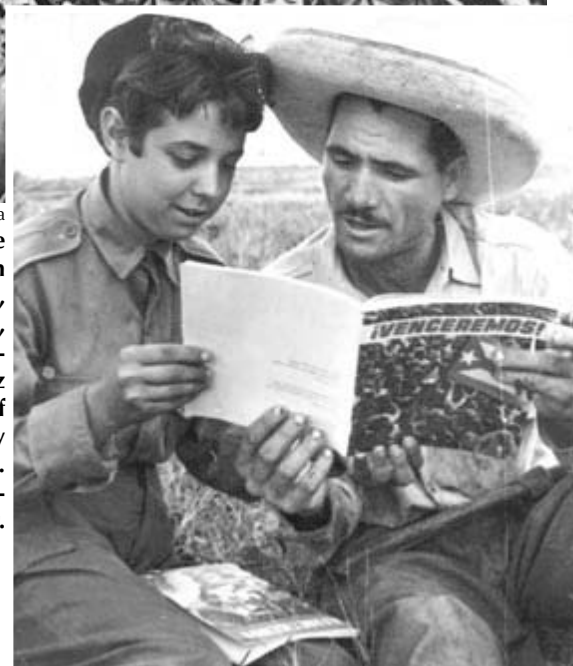
And in April 1961 Cuban toilers decisively defeated the U.S.-organized Bay of Pigs invasion.

From the outset the revolution has extended the hand of solidarity to toilers worldwide — from medical and military assistance to Algeria where a workers and farmers government came to power in 1962, to sending 425,000 volunteer combatants to Angola to help defeat invasions by apartheid South Africa, to leading the fight against Ebola in Africa last year. Today there are thousands of Cuban medical workers volunteering to provide health care all over the world.

## Defending socialist revolution today

Washington hopes to accomplish its long-standing goal — destroying the socialist revolution and destruction of workers and farmers power there — by the workings of capitalist economic pressures.

At the same time, Cuba faces the effects of the worldwide capitalist economic crisis — exacerbated by the continuing U.S. economic embargo.



The Cuban government has taken necessary measures and retreats to attract more foreign investment, streamline bloated workforces at state-owned companies, and increase productivity, including steps to make it easier to set up small businesses and be "self-employed."

The Cuban press is giving broad coverage to government-led discussions on how to face these challenges, and reviewing how the revolution mobilized workers and farmers to meet challenges they confronted at key turning points in the past.

"The history of our revolution is full of glorious pages in the face of difficulties, risks and threats," Raúl Castro told the National Assembly of People's Power Dec. 29.

The return of the Cuban Five — Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Guerrero, Fernando González and René González — has reinforced the fight to maintain the values and course of the revolution. Since their return they have spent a large part of their time visiting factories, farms and campuses, speaking with working people and students.

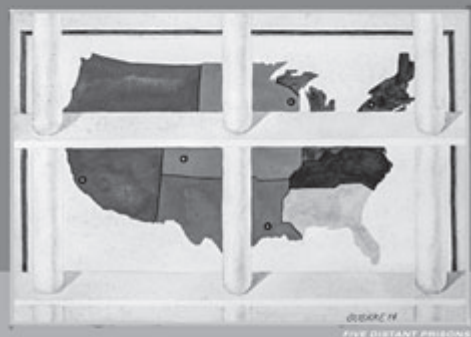
The Dec. 17 issue of *Granma* published interviews with each of the Five to mark one year since they all were back in Cuba.

"We have received feedback and learned more about the Cuban reality every day," Guerrero said. "I believe this is also important for any other tasks that will no doubt come our way."

"The situation Cuba is experiencing today with regard to the re-establishment of relations with the U.S. and the process of social-economic transformations underway demands better preparation, consistency, study, updating, something to which we feel extremely committed," Ramón Labañino said, "because we are part of this project and Cuban society, and this is what we have been immersed in this year."

## Coming February 1 . . .

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**—Antonio Guerrero**

In interviews conducted in August and December 2015, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González — known the world over as the Cuban Five — talk about their experiences as part of the US working class during their up to 16 years behind bars on federal frame-up charges of "conspiracy" to commit espionage. They discuss prospects for Cuba's socialist revolution as well.

With an introduction by Mary-Alice Waters. Includes more than 20 photos with others incarcerated with them; in their visits around the world thanking the "jury of millions" who fought for and won their freedom from prison; and in discussions with Cuban workers, students, and others.

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# Vietnamese people, US anti-war fight stopped Washington's war

Out Now! A Participant's Account of the Movement in the U.S. Against the Vietnam War by Fred Halstead is one of January's Books of the Month. Halstead, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and of the international campaign against the war, covers events from 1960 to 1975. He describes how youth radicalized in support of the Cuban Revolution and the mass working-class struggle for Black rights gave impetus to what became a powerful movement against Washington's growing war in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. U.S. imperialism was defeated thanks to the perseverance of the peoples of Indochina and the solidarity and anti-war resistance of tens of millions around the world. This excerpt is from the afterword. Copyright © 1978 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FRED HALSTEAD

The Second Indochina War was the first in the epoch of American imperialism in which the United States went down to defeat. After emerging victorious from the Spanish-American War and two world wars, then encountering a stalemate in Korea, the Pentagon's military machine was ignominiously evicted from Vietnam, thanks to the persevering struggle of the Indochinese plus the antiwar resistance of the American people. This was the



Militant/Michael Hardy

April 15, 1970, protest in New York, part of national day of action that mobilized hundreds of thousands in the streets to demand immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam.

most sustained and, except for Russia in 1905 and 1917, the most effective antiwar movement within any big power while the shooting was going on.

The official propagandists cooked up various formulas to justify their military intervention. It was depicted as a crusade for democracy and freedom against the threat of communist totalitarianism and for the defense of the independence of the South against invasion from the North. The U.S. was there, it was said, to fulfill treaty obligations to the client Saigon regime and thwart the expansionism of China and the Soviet Union. Toward the end the excuses became exceedingly thin: to assure the return of the POWs; to prevent a bloodbath in the South if the NLF should take over completely; to protect U.S. troops as they were withdrawn. All this was demagoguery.

In reality, U.S. intervention had a thoroughly imperialistic character. The colossus of world capitalism hurled its military might without provocation against a small and divided colonial nation thousands of miles away struggling for self-determination and unification. A series of American presidents sought to do what King George III's empire failed to do against the rebel patriots of 1776.

On one side was a state armed to the teeth promoting the strategic aims and material interests of the corporate rich on the global arena; on the other was a worker and peasant uprising heading toward the overthrow of capitalist

power and property, despite the limited political program of its leadership.

These underlying anticapitalist and antilandlord tendencies were eventually clearly expressed in the reunification of Vietnam in 1976 and the process of eliminating capitalist property relations in the South. The prolonged civil war in South Vietnam thereby proved to be an integral part of the international confrontation between the upholders of capitalism and the forces moving in a socialist direction that has been unfolding since the October 1917 Bolshevik revolution. ...

The antiwar movement began with people who were already radicalized: pacifists, socialists, communists, rebellious students, and a scattering of morally outraged individuals. At the start these were a small minority, convinced of the justness of their cause and ready to face unpopularity for their stand. The energy, resoluteness, and fortitude of this vanguard brought the movement into being and remained its prime mover.

The most paradoxical aspect of this profound and unforgettable chapter of American history was the central and decisive role played by the left-wing elements, which included the radical pacifists. When it began, it was almost unthinkable that they could set in motion and head a movement of such vast scope. They themselves did not really expect such a development. They just felt obliged to do whatever they could.

At the beginning of the sixties the

American left — old and new — was looked upon as an esoteric fringe with virtually negligible influence. So far as numbers in radical organizations were concerned, this was close to the truth. The cold war and the witch-hunting atmosphere, in conjunction with the prolonged prosperity of the 1950s, had decimated their ranks. Even after their numbers increased manyfold during the sixties and early seventies, the tens of thousands directly supporting the various radical groupings were not very large compared to the entire population.

Yet this unrespectable, "irrelevant," and by no means homogeneous band became "the saving remnant" as it moved into the vacancy left by the established educational, religious, labor union, journalistic, and political institutions. These were tied in with the two-party system and went along with the generals and the State Department, supporting a perfectly obviously illegal and unjust war to one extent or another. ...

Insofar as the Democratic and Republican doves contributed to the spread of antiwar sentiment — and some of them did by lending their authority occasionally to antiwar activities, publicizing certain facts about the war, and so on — their activities were contradicted by their steering people toward the two parties that supported the war and by their effective votes in Congress.

The issue was not resolved, or even ameliorated, through the two-party electoral process. On the contrary, the election periods were used to precisely the opposite effect. They served to hoodwink the antiwar feelings, defuse antiwar protests, and give the war-makers some extra maneuverability in their pernicious and ill-fated plans. That happened with every congressional and presidential election from 1964, when Johnson ran as a "peace" candidate, to 1972, when the Nixon administration announced that "peace is at hand" and then, after the election, went ahead with another "brutalization" of the Vietnamese population.

Those who retain or preach faith in the reformability of the capitalist two-party system must reckon with the fact that the American movement against the Vietnam War — the greatest moral resurgence in the U.S. since the struggle to abolish slavery — had to arise and maintain itself apart from and in defiance of both parties.

January

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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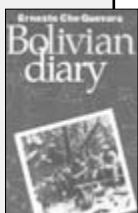
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# Defend, emulate Cuban Revolution!

We join millions around the world in solidarity with revolutionary Cuba on the 57th anniversary of the workers and farmers coming to power. The Socialist Workers Party stands shoulder to shoulder with all those defending Cuba and its socialist revolution, as we have done since Jan. 1, 1959. We seek to emulate the Cuban example here.

In *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes describes how the party campaigned to defend the Cuban Revolution on the eve of the U.S.-led 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion:

“We pointed to the immense popularity of the revolution among the Cuban people in response to the measures the new government was organizing them to take. The Mafia-run gambling dens and brothels, a national shame, had been shut down. Land had been distributed to more than 100,000 tenant farmers, sharecroppers and squatters. House and apartment rents, as well as electricity and telephone rates, had been slashed. Racial discrimination was outlawed and equal access not only made law but also enforced. The best public beaches, which had been previously off limits to Blacks, had been opened to all. A nationwide campaign to eliminate illiteracy had been launched — part of a broader extension of public education to the countryside, among the poor, and for women. Popular militias had formed in factories, other workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, and towns across the island, as Cubans demanded arms and military training to defend their new conquests. The huge money-gouging U.S. monopolies had been nationalized, as well as the major landed, commercial, and industrial property holdings of the wealthy Cuban families who had been the social and political base of the Batista dictatorship.

“Through more than two years of popular mobilizations, the workers and farmers of Cuba had begun transforming not only their country but themselves,” Barnes says. “It was precisely for this reason, we explained, that Cubans could, and would, fight to the death to defend their revolution — and do so successfully.”

The Cuban Revolution helped win a new generation of workers and youth to the fight to make a revolution here in the U.S., the center of world imperialist exploitation and oppression, Barnes writes.

Today, as crisis-ridden capitalism offers working people nothing but continued wars, grinding depression and attacks on rights and living conditions on a world scale, new forces are entering struggles — from the fight for \$15 an hour and unionization, to fights against police brutality and abuse, to efforts to push back the bosses’ drive to divide our class through two-tier wages.

New generations can draw on the example of the Cuban Revolution — including the Cuban people’s victory in standing up to the world’s mightiest imperialist power for 57 years, continuing to defend their revolution and extend the hand of international solidarity around the world — to build the revolutionary working-class movement here.

As Barnes puts it, “What the workers and farmers of Cuba showed us is that with class solidarity, political consciousness, courage, focused and persistent efforts at education, and a revolutionary leadership of a caliber like that in Cuba — a leadership tested and forged in battle over years — it is possible to stand up to enormous might and seemingly insurmountable odds *and win*.”

## UK gov’t moves to let cops ‘shoot to kill’

**Continued from front page**

On Dec. 11, Baker was shot dead by a plainclothes officer while sitting in a car outside Wood Green Crown Court in north London. Police allege that Baker was part of a plot to spring two men who were being sentenced that day, and that a fake handgun that fires plastic pellets was recovered at the scene. Authorities say there is no recording of the incident, either from surveillance video or police body cameras.

Residents of Tottenham, where Baker lived, voiced their anger at a Dec. 17 public meeting of some 150 people, addressed by officials of the government’s Independent Police Complaints Commission and the Metropolitan Police. There was applause when IPCC representative Cindy Butts said an officer had been arrested — an unusual move — as part of an IPCC criminal homicide investigation. The officer, who hasn’t been named, has been suspended from duty. Butts made clear, however, that he has not been charged.

“I’ve been told that he was sleeping in his car. Police officers had information that was not 100% that he was going to do it — you took an innocent man away,” a friend of Baker told the meeting, according to the *Daily Mail*. The IPCC now says they are investigating the claim that Baker was asleep when he was shot.

“It’s another case of shoot first and ask questions later,” Rupert Sylvester, a long-time fighter against police brutality, told the *Militant*. Sylvester’s son, Roger, was killed by police in 1999.

The arrest of the cop sends “a very bad message,” said former Metropolitan Police Commissioner Ian Blair. “These are men and women who go to work to do an incredibly dangerous job for which they volunteer and if they do their duty and shoot somebody because they have to,” he told Sky News, “they should not be treated as criminals.”

As commissioner, Blair was a vocal defender of the shoot-to-kill policy following the notorious counterterrorism operation in which police executed Jean Charles de Menezes in 2005. They later admitted the Brazilian-born electrician was completely innocent.

No firearms cop has ever been convicted of unlawful killing. Under the current law they are allowed to open fire if they have an “honest and instinctive” belief that it is “reasonable.” Last July former officer Anthony

Long was cleared of murdering Azelle Rodney 10 years after shooting him dead, including with four bullets to the head. Long argued self-defense, saying he feared Rodney was reaching for a gun.

That same month, Home Secretary Theresa May announced a review of deaths in police custody, saying they have “the potential to undermine dramatically the relationship between the public and the police.” By official figures, 17 people had died at the hands of police in the previous 12 months, a five-year high.

Working people are wary of the government’s moves. “It’s alright for police to use weapons if there is danger, but you need to have some measures to check them,” said Nadeem Butt, who works at the McVitie’s cookie factory. “Some people think they have power when they have a gun.”

“Cameron is giving police more power to shoot innocent people and get away with it,” said David Grant, another McVitie’s worker, who has personally known several people who died in police custody.

## Colorado meatpackers

**Continued from page 6**

after terror attacks linked to Islamic State supporters.

Sharif Shafi, who worked in the plant for only three months, said that when he started he had to go four days without praying and it was very hard. “Then a worker came to me and gave me a break to pray and I was good,” he said. “Then a supervisor came and said, ‘If I see you pray tomorrow you will be fired.’”

Jaylani Hussein, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations in Minnesota, told a press conference at the Denver Muslim Society Dec. 30 CAIR is negotiating with Cargill to get the workers back on the job and defend their right to pray there.

Denver-based Teamsters Local 455, which has a contract at Cargill, has not commented on the fight.

A similar struggle took place at JBS Swift meatpacking plants in nearby Greeley and in Grand Island, Nebraska, in 2008-2009, after workers were fired over their right to pray there. After negotiations between the United Food and Commercial Workers and the bosses, workers won their jobs back and the company agreed to provide rooms and breaks for prayers.

## Chicago cop killings

**Continued from front page**

my son was an honor student. He’s here for Christmas break, and now I’ve lost him.”

LeGrier, who graduated from high school in 2014, was taking electrical engineering classes at Northern Illinois University.

Relatives, neighbors, co-workers, students and local politicians joined the vigil. “This is part of a pattern of excessive police abuse and force,” Rev. Jesse Jackson from Operation PUSH told the crowd. “The bullets went through the house. LeGrier was shot seven times.”

Antonio LeGrier, Quintonio’s father, called 911 to get help when he saw his son acting angry and carrying a baseball bat. He also called Jones, who lived downstairs, and asked her to let the cops in when they arrived. When she did one of them shot and killed both Quintonio and her. The cops say Jones’ killing was an “accident.”

Antonio LeGrier told the *Chicago Sun Times* that after the killings he saw the police officer standing on the grass 30 feet from the bodies talking to himself. “In my opinion, he knew he had messed up,” LeGrier said. “He knew he had shot blindly, recklessly into the doorway and now two people are dead because of it.”

“There are 20 of Bettie’s co-workers here today. We are supposed to be at work but we felt it was important enough to miss work to come here,” said Shanequa Head, who worked with Jones at Alpha Baking.

“We had to come out to show our support,” said Frank Cosby, newly elected shop steward of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union Local 1 at the factory.

“The morning after Christmas my wife’s aunt, Bettie Jones, was shot and killed by a Chicago police officer,” wrote Jahmal Cole in an online petition calling for the state legislature to ban the grand jury system in cases of police shootings. “We’ve seen nationwide the same repeating story. A police officer uses excessive deadly force with ample video evidence. Prosecutors send the case to a grand jury instead of charging the officer. This grand jury process is postponed months or years to quell public outrage. Ultimately, a grand jury does not indict any officer of wrongdoing.”

“It is important that a fundamental change take place,” said vigil organizer Rev. Marshall Hatch of New Mount Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church, where one of Bettie Jones’ daughters worships. “We don’t trust IPRA [Independent Police Review Authority], Mayor Emanuel’s police accountability board. And we don’t trust Emanuel, who was part of a police-murder cover-up for 400 days” in the killing of McDonald.

LeGrier’s father filed a wrongful death lawsuit against the city the day after the vigil. Emanuel, who had left for a family vacation Dec. 18, cut short the trip and flew back to Chicago Dec. 29.

The mayor appeared at a news conference the next day along with Interim Police Superintendent John Escalante, announcing that the city will purchase 1,400 more Tasers and Chicago cops will receive further training in how to use them, saying it was an alternative to firing their guns.

He backed Escalante’s decision, following the shooting of Jones and LeGrier, to increase to 30 days the amount of paid desk duty cops will be required to take after they shoot someone. The requirement had been three days.

On Dec. 31 Cook County State’s Attorney Anita Alvarez announced that she was requesting FBI participation in the investigation of the killings of LeGrier and Jones. “This is a deeply disturbing incident that demands a very deliberate and meticulous independent investigation,” she said.

That same day more than 200 demonstrators gathered at City Hall. “Tasers kill, Rahm is clueless,” their signs read.

### ‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

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